Met Office

NEWS

Met Office and Surfers Against Sewage team up

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Met Office staff members have hit the beach this week, to mark the start of their new charity partnership with Surfers Against Sewage.

Marine conservation charity Surfers Against Sewage has been chosen by the Met Office as its official partner charity for the next three years, and the pair-up started with a 'big clean' on Ness Cove beach, near Teignmouth. A team of 27 volunteers from the Met Office collected eight large bags of rubbish in one afternoon.

The Met Office chooses a new official charity to support every three years. Hundreds of staff members voted, and Surfers Against Sewage – based like the Met Office in the South West – was selected. Surfers Against Sewage replaces RNLI, the lifeboat charity, for whom Met Office staff raised over £27,000 during the last three years.

Surfers Against Sewage campaigns against environmental pollution, and its current focus is on reducing and removing single-use plastic waste from the ocean environment. Its programmes support:

- 175 Regional Reps across the UK campaigning on marine conservation issues
- More than 370 Plastic Free Communities across the UK
- More than 270 Plastic Free Schools with pupil-led programmes
- Campaigns such as Plastic Free Parliament with MPs
- Mobilising more than 70,000 volunteers at 1500 beach and river cleans across the UK

Recent campaign successes for Surfers Against Sewage include the introduction of the charge for single-use plastic bags, the achievement of Plastic Free Parliament and the Government's commitment to introduce a Deposit Return Scheme to capture plastic bottles and cans.

The Met Office beach clean is part of the biggest Autumn Beach and River Clean ever, that will see over 400 beach and 60 river cleans taking place across the UK through September and October.

Ben Hewitt, Director of Campaigns and Projects at Surfers Against Sewage said "We are delighted to be chosen as charity partner for the Met Office. We will be looking at opportunities to tackle the scourge of single-use plastic waste ending up in our oceans and there is a natural fit between both SAS and the Met Office, based right here in the South West but educating, inspiring and empowering people across the UK and beyond."

Andy Yeatman, Deputy Head of Communications at the Met Office said: "We're really pleased to announce this partnership with Surfers Against Sewage, particularly because it's a charity that has close ties to us here in the South West.

"We are sad to say goodbye to our previous partners RNLI, but very proud of the achievement of our colleagues in raising nearly £30,000 over the last three years. We look forward to throwing our staff's enthusiasm at raising equally impressive amounts for Surfers Against Sewage!"

In December 2018, Met Office scientist Kate Salmon will row across the Atlantic Ocean alongside three other crewmates to raise money for Surfers Against Sewage and their ocean plastics campaign.

- 9 million tonnes of plastic ends up in the ocean each year and nearly 700 species, including endangered ones, are known to have been affected by it.

- A recent Surfers Against Sewage survey found that 27% of plastic collected was 'avoidable' or single-use plastic such as bottles and food packaging.
- Surfers Against Sewage are currently calling for volunteers for the Autumn Beach and River Clean (20-28 October), with the aim of mobilising 15,000 volunteers from coastal and inland communities to help clean 400 beaches and 60 rivers.
- The Autumn Beach and River Clean is focusing on auditing and monitoring the types of single-use plastic bottles to feed into an upcoming Government consultation on England's Deposit Return Scheme. To lead or join a clean, email Jack on beachcleans@sas.org.uk

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